



Anglesey **Against** Wind Turbines

A Review of Questions to the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change,

House of Commons 17 October 2013.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/democracylive/house-of-commons-24565372>

Below is a selection of the most pertinent Questions and Government answers relating to Government policies that help create, or fail to alleviate fuel poverty, and also those questions which demonstrate the inequitable policy of subsidising unreliable wind energy.

Quotes from MP's are in **black** and any contextual comments are in **red**.

Neil Parish CON

The Eco system was supposed to deliver 15% of the funding to upgrade hard to reach homes in rural areas – evidence on the ground suggests that the big 6 (energy companies) are not willing to assist with supplying new oil-fired and LPG boilers, so given the fact that energy bills are over 50% higher in off-grid areas ...what is the Government going to do about this?

Ann McKeichin LAB

Fuel poverty is increasing.... and yet at the same time the amount of money spent on energy efficiency programmes directed at the fuel poor has actually decreased by 50% since 2010.

Philip Hollobone CON

My constituent, a pensioner with a £700 annual heating bill....lives in a terraced solid wall house that requires external wall insulation and rendering....he has contacted 17 companies and has been told that the work will cost between £4,000 and £15,000 and that he has to pay to get the work done, and that the Green Deal isn't available for this sort of work.

Mark Lazarowicz Labour Co-Operative

Some customers are actually paying more because of Ofgen's recommendation (to the energy companies) for the re-introduction of standing charges. This is resulting in some customers, who are energy efficient and using their (own or less) energy, actually getting increased bills rather than lower bills.

Chi Onwurah LAB

Npower told my constituent, a pensioner, they were ending his existing tariff and his new tariff would be 50% more expensive. SSE estimated my bill will be 10% higher and so have tripled my direct debit.....when a market isn't functioning and is fuelling a cost of living crisis, doesn't a Government intervene?

Jim Sheridan LAB

Ineos in Grangemouth, who supply energy needs for the whole of Scotland and northern England have walked away from talks with the trade unions (have closed the plant) and more seriously is now demanding taxpayers money in order to invest in their company.

Tom Greatrex, Shadow Energy and Climate Change Minister

We propose that all power trading is on an open exchange and stopping companies selling power to themselves at secret prices.....and ensure people know why they are paying what they are paying.

Written Question 8. Jeremy Lefroy CON

What proportion of UK energy demand is met by renewable sources?

Greg Barker, Minister for Climate Change

In 2012 under the measure used for the 2009 EU Renewable Energy Directive renewable sources contributed 4.1% of gross final energy consumption. However in terms of renewable electricity the share of overall generation has more than doubled in the last 3 years from 6% in Q2 2010 to 15.5% Q2 2013.

AAWT Comment: Only the first part of this answer is a true attempt to give an accurate answer to the written question. In respect of electricity the Minister refers to 'generation' not final energy 'consumption' which is very different. Final energy consumption is a much lower figure, due to numerous factors within the technical balancing and distribution capabilities of the grid and system operator, and due to the lack of any mechanism to marry the availability of wind energy with customer demand. This is a good example of Government Green Spin.

The Minister's response to Mr Lefroy's subsequent question about Government policy to deliver predictable tidal power was all fluff and generalisations to cover-up their almost total inaction thus far. And he gave a similar response to Barry Sherman, Labour Co-op, who asked about willow coppice and biofuel from farms.

At around 30mins into the session. The Minister, **Gregory Barker**, agreed there were few UK jobs and little UK construction input into the London Array offshore wind farm he said:-

"80% of it was constructed or contracted abroad"

There were questions about European interconnectors to facilitate a European single market in energy and Energy Minister **Michael Fallon** was positive about the idea (despite there being a negative approach thus far to a sub-sea National Grid interconnector to link north and south Wales). The Minister said he was raising the European interconnectors issue with the EU Commission.

At around 33mins Tobias Ellwood asked the first of a series of questions about subsidy for onshore and offshore wind and the potential damage developments bring for local landscapes, tourism businesses and communities.

Among the more concrete replies were:-

Michael Fallon, Energy Minister

Visual impact and the acceptability of any proposal is obviously one of the factors that will be considered at by the Planning Inspectorate and then by my Right Hon. Friend in determining any application.

Andrea Leadsom CON

The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government has said that at the moment planning applications give insufficient weight to local environmental considerations like landscape, heritage and local amenity and does he agree with me that the subsidies provided to developers need to take account of the very real local concerns about how these things are blighting the countryside.

Michael Fallon, Energy Minister

We have reduced the support for onshore wind projects from April this year and the draft strike prices we have set out are reduced over time up until 2018. But the new planning policy framework makes it clear that local authorities should have policies in place to ensure that any adverse impacts including visual impacts and cumulative impacts are addressed satisfactorily and my Right Hon friend the Sec of State for Communities and Local Government has made it clear that he intends now to call in more applications at appeal to ensure that the new planning practice guidance is meeting the Government's intentions.

Sir Alan Beith LIB

While the incentives are clearly proving sufficient to encourage a number of prominent local Conservatives to apply for wind farms to be built on land in Northumberland what concerns a lot of my constituents is whether landscape and proximity to residences can be taken properly into account at every stage in the planning process.

Michael Fallon, Minister for Energy

Planning applications in respect of onshore wind should only be approved if the impacts are acceptable to the local community and I think the new planning guidance from DCLG helps to deliver the balance that we expect, ensuring that proper weight is given to the visual impact to the cumulative impact and to any heritage implications of particular sites.

AAWT Comment: Eric Pickles is already showing his teeth, denying one wind farm application within a few days of announcing that he intends to call in the more contentious applications (See our News page). Whilst this applies only to developments in England it will no doubt be brought to the attention of Welsh Assembly members by campaign groups – and AAWT will certainly be providing our representatives with a full analysis.